

**LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Worker Retraining Program (WRT)
Financial Aid 2005-06 Guidelines**

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LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Worker Retraining Program (WRT)
Financial Aid 2005-06 Guidelines

I. Background: "The Washington State legislature has appropriated funds to provide retraining opportunities for dislocated and unemployed workers in the state of Washington. The Worker Retraining Program continues to give priority service to the dislocated workers with substantial tenure. Eligible students include individuals who have been laid off or who have received a notice of lay off from employment, who are eligible for or have exhausted their entitlement to unemployment compensation benefits within the previous 24 months, who were self-employed, or who are displaced homemakers." – WRT Guidelines, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

Each recipient must have an educational plan that consists of a coherent sequence of courses leading to reemployment. Because funds are limited, Lower Columbia College (LCC) may be unable to fund all eligible students. Therefore, eligibility levels have been established to assist in prioritizing the funds. See Section VIII, paragraph C-3.

II. Definitions:

- A. **Dislocated Worker:** an individual whose job has been eliminated or career field is declining as defined by Southwest Washington Development Counsel Demand Decline List.
- B. **Displaced Homemaker:** an individual who has been providing unpaid services to a family member(s) in the home and who
 - 1. has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income, **and**
 - 2. is unemployed or underemployed as defined by Southwest Washington Development Counsel Demand Decline List.
- C. **Formerly Self-Employed:** an individual who was employed, including employment as a farmer, rancher, or fisherman, but is unemployed or underemployed as a result of *general economic conditions* in the community in which the individual resides or because of *natural disasters*. Business activity may be related to a business that has closed or downsized.
- D. **Underemployed:** The individual is
 - 1. not working at a position for which s/he has been trained or educated; **or**
 - 2. working at 80% or less of their former wages; **or**
 - 3. working 20+ hours per week and the household income is 150% of the poverty level as defined by the State of Washington; **or**
 - 4. working less than 32 hours per week.

III. Eligibility:

- A. To be classified as a Worker Retraining-eligible student, the individual must:
 - 1. have been laid off or have received a notice of lay off from employment, currently be eligible to draw unemployment insurance or have drawn unemployment insurance within the last 24 months, or meet the definition of a displaced homemaker or dislocated self-employed individual within the last 24 months, and
 - 2. enroll or intend to enroll in professional-technical classes. This could include a degree, certificate, or a set of classes to develop job skills; developmental classes needed, and associated costs and fees to prepare for a professional-technical program.
 - 3. apply for federal student financial aid using the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* and provide proof of this to the LCC financial aid office.

Workforce and financial aid directors, in accordance with *Financial Aid Guidelines*, will review exceptions to any of the worker retraining guidelines on a case-by-case basis (See Section X11).

- B. Students must provide written verification that they meet the definition of a Worker Retraining-eligible student. For all categories, eligibility must be within 24 months of the first day of the LCC quarter for which they apply.
1. Individuals who have been laid off or have received a notice of lay off from employment, those who are currently eligible to draw unemployment insurance must provide proof of eligibility.
 2. Displaced Homemakers must sign a statement self-certifying that they meet the definition of a displaced homemaker per the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). In addition to applying for WRT financial aid, these displaced homemakers must provide:
 - a. Verification of their dependence on the income of another family member; e.g. tax documents that lists the occupation of the individual and the family member; and that the household income came mainly from that family member.
 - b. Verification of the change in the individual's living arrangements; e.g. court documents, an attorney's statement, or a document from another person who can verify the change in living arrangements.
 3. Formerly self-employed individuals must provide:
 - a. Copies of their last IRS return verifying that they were self-employed and that their income from this source has been in decline.
 - b. Document from the Employment Security Department (ESD) or an employment outlook source such as WOIS or WILMA that verifies that the job classification in question is in decline due to general economic conditions in the community or because of a natural disaster.
- C. Students do *not* have to complete their educational program within 24 months of drawing unemployment insurance. For eligible students, funding will be provided for up to 150% of program length, defined by number of required credits. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
- D. Students who have defaulted on student loans *may not* be eligible for Worker Retraining Financial Aid. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

IV. Criteria for Remaining in the Program:

- A. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (See Appendix B). Students receiving a "Pass" grade in classes with a "Pass" or "Fail" grading standard (e.g. Adult Basic Education classes) will still be eligible for Worker Retraining funds.
- B. Students who begin full-time employment (at least 32 hours/week) while receiving Worker Retraining aid must report this to the financial aid office.
- C. Worker Retraining eligible students will be funded on a quarter to quarter basis.

V. Coding for a Worker Retraining Participant

- A. Anyone who meets the definition of a Worker Retraining student participant will be coded as such in the Student Management System (SMS) for state tracking purposes.
1. All students awarded Worker Retraining funds will be coded as a Worker Retraining participant.
 2. The Worker Retraining coding could also be assigned to those paying their educational expenses with state and federal aid, such as VA educational benefits, WIA, TAA, WFFA, or their own funds, but who otherwise meet the worker retraining eligibility criteria.
 3. Students do not need to be served by the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisor to be coded as a participant.
 4. Because appropriate documentation may not be obtainable for potential participants, the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisor may not be able to code all eligible students.

B. A Worker Retraining code is assigned to each identified participant. The code is maintained in the *Current Work Status* section on the student's registration form and in the student's record in SMS. The code is assigned after the student completes the Worker Retraining Program Application. The following codes are assigned:

1. *80 Long-Tenured (Substantial-Tenured) Dislocated Worker Training* – has experienced a decline in the person's industry, mass layoff or plant closure, or a decline in the need for the person's job, and has worked for the same employer for at least 18 months.
2. *81 Short-Tenured Dislocated Worker Training* – has experienced a decline in the person's industry, mass layoff, or plant closure, or a decline in the need for the person's job, but has not worked for the same employer for at least 18 months.
3. *82 Others Receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits, Not Dislocated* – is currently drawing unemployment insurance, but the person has not experienced a decline in their industry, mass layoff, or plant closure, or a decline in the need for their job.
4. *83 Displaced Homemaker* – an individual who has been providing unpaid services to (a) family member(s) in the home, and who (1) has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income and (2) is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.
5. *84 Self-Employed* – was self-employed, including employment as a farmer, rancher, or fisherman, but is unemployed as the result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters.
6. *85 Former Boeing Employees*

VI. Funding Application Process

- A. People who fit the criteria should contact the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisor in the LCC Career Center. Applicants should complete and turn in the Worker Retraining Program Application available at the office of the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisor.
- B. Students will complete the paperwork necessary to determine Worker Retraining eligibility and to develop an educational plan. Forms include:
 - Worker Retraining Program Application – determines eligibility based on unemployment benefits
 - Displaced Homemaker or formerly Self-Employed status document – determines the proper workforce training code that will be assigned to the student; determines student's eligibility based on income guidelines; also identifies the person's childcare needs.
- C. Students must apply for federal financial aid using the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*.

VII. Enrolling in Classes/Credits

- A. Students must apply for admission and enroll in a program that consists of a coherent plan or series of courses that will lead to re-employment. This could include professional-technical courses or developmental classes that are required to prepare the student for a professional-technical field.
- B. If students are currently drawing unemployment insurance, they should not enroll in classes that will interfere with the work search requirements of the Employment Security Department (ESD). If such a conflict occurs, they may apply for *commissioner-approved training*. The application can be downloaded at <http://fortress.wa.gov/esd/portal/unemployment/benefits/forms/cat.pdf>. This process should be completed before enrolling, if possible.

VIII. Awarding Worker Retraining Funds

Worker Retraining Program Financial Aid awards will be coordinated with other forms of federal and state financial aid to prevent over-awarding. Worker Retraining Financial Aid is generally used as *start up* funds and awarded for one quarter. Awards beyond this first quarter will be made on a case-by-case basis.

A. The Worker Retraining Program can provide an award containing four different types of aid: tuition and fees; books and supplies; transportation; and child care.

1. Tuition and fees costs can be awarded so long as funds are available. Tuition will be awarded only for those classes required for the student's professional-technical program. Students may enroll full- or part-time.
2. Book awards are initially set at the standard book price for the classes required for the professional-technical program in which the student is enrolled. Students may petition the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator if there are unexpected needs. *Supplies* are those expendable items required by a program. See Appendix C for the Approved Supply List.
3. Transportation costs up to \$150.00 per quarter may be paid to students living 30 miles outside the Lower Columbia College campus unless transportation costs are reimbursed by another program.
4. Students seeking assistance with child care expenses must provide proof of these expenses in the form of a receipt or form completed by the licensed day care provided. The form is available at the LCC financial aid office. Students must also provide verification of responsibility for the child/ren by providing an IRS document listing the child/ren as their dependent. The Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator will make a determination of the award.

B. Prioritization in funding eligible students

1. As funds are exhausted during the year, it may be necessary to prioritize funding to particular eligible worker retaining participants. The Worker Retaining Coordinator and the financial aid director, in conjunction with the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisory Committee (WRTFAAC) must exercise discretion in awarding these limited funds.
2. The Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator and the LCC Financial Aid Director may need to stop awarding one or more types of aid or provide partial awards that supplement other sources of funding. The WRTFAAC will provide guidance and advice.
3. The Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator and the Financial Aid Director may need to choose among eligible students in awarding funds. The WRTFAAC will provide guidance and advice for this prioritization process. The goal is to try to serve those most in need of retraining and funding assistance. The following priorities will be used in making such decisions:
 - 1) Dislocated workers with substantial tenure with no prior college education
 - 2) Other eligible persons with no prior college education
 - 3) Length of time student needs to complete program
 - 4) Students pursuing programs that are not financial aid-eligible
 - 5) Students with *commissioner approved training*
 - 6) Dislocated workers with substantial tenure with prior college education
 - 7) Other eligible persons with prior college education

IX. Standards of Academic Progress (See Item IV and Appendix B)

X. Record Keeping

- A. Paper files are created for each student. Files include all records related to student interactions, eligibility for the Worker Retraining program, enrollment, and funding.
- B. State auditors periodically review the files to ensure that funds are appropriately awarded to eligible participants.
- C. Files may include the following documents:
 - 1. Summary of Interactions: Advisor's written notes about interactions with students
 - 2. Worker Retraining Program Application
 - 3. Initial Assessment form
 - 4. Proof of eligibility of drawing unemployment insurance or verification of meeting the definition of Displaced Homemaker or Dislocated Self-Employed individual
 - 5. Proof of all household income
 - 6. ASSET/COMPASS placement results if appropriate
 - 7. Registration forms/transcripts for all funded quarters
 - 8. Worker Retraining award form for all funded quarters
 - 9. Verification of all child care expenses and custody of a child, if appropriate
 - 10. Education program
- D. WRT files will be kept with the general Financial Aid files for six years after the last quarter funded.

XI. Appeals Process

- A. Students may appeal their disqualification or cancellation from the Worker Retraining Program by providing a written statement describing their situation, including proper documentation, as to why they believe they should continue to qualify for Worker Retraining funds. This statement and documentation should be given to the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator. The Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisory Committee will then review the case and then make a decision based on the merits of the appeal.
- B. If the student is dissatisfied with the WRTFAAC decision, the student may appeal the Committee's decision to the Vice President for Student Success at LCC.

(See Appendix A for contact information)

XII. Reviewing and Amending Guidelines

These guidelines will be examined and amended annually or more frequently as circumstances dictate. All exceptional applications may be reviewed on a case by case basis.

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I. Background

The goal of the Training Completion Aid Program is to increase the completion and success rates of Worker Retraining Program students by providing them with some living expense resources while they are in training. Studies conducted by the State Board have revealed a 20 percent increase in student retention for students who received Training Completion Aid (TCA) over those who did not receive aid. These funds are to be used to increase program completion for those enrolled students whose unemployment benefit eligibility will be exhausted before their training program is completed. Training Completion Aid funds are not intended for use in payment of tuition or direct expenses, however students may choose to use them for that purpose.

II. Eligibility

To be eligible for these funds, a Worker Retraining Program student must meet the following criteria:

- A. Be currently enrolled in at least six credits in their approved program.
- B. Have exhausted all their unemployment insurance, including extended unemployment insurance benefits for dislocated workers, or have reduced unemployment benefits.
- C. Maintain satisfactory academic progress and be in good standing with the college. (See Appendix B)

Please note that students do not have to demonstrate financial need to receive these funds. Students may begin to receive Training Completion Aid funds when their unemployment insurance benefits have expired or will expire in the quarter for which they are applying.

III. Priority for service

The legislative intent of Training Completion Aid is to award funds to students so they can complete a training program. To accomplish this, the following priorities for service have been established:

- A. Current enrollees whose unemployment insurance benefits have expired.
- B. Current enrollees whose unemployment insurance benefits will expire before training is completed.
- C. New students whose unemployment insurance benefits have expired.
- D. New students whose unemployment insurance benefits will expire before training is completed.
- E. Current enrollees and new students whose unemployment insurance benefits will be reduced before training is completed.

Note: Current enrollees are defined as students who have successfully completed at least one quarter of a training program. New enrollees are defined as students who are enrolled in the first quarter of a training program.

LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE
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IV. Calculating awards

- A. The maximum award is \$5,000 per student per academic year (fall, winter, spring).
 1. For Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters - award at the rate of \$150 per week of training (11 week quarter) - total not to exceed \$5,000 for the three quarters.
 2. For Summer Quarter - award at the rate of \$205 per week of training (8 week quarter) based on the following:
 - Students must be taking classes that are required for their training program.
 - Students must petition the Worker Retraining Advisory Sub-committee for approval.
 - Total not to exceed \$1,640 for the quarter.
- B. A lesser amount may be awarded to the student. Lower Columbia College will work with the student, on a case by case basis, considering the following:
 1. Will Training Completion Aid affect the student's eligibility for other federal and state financial aid?
 2. Will a lesser amount be more appropriate based on the student's personal circumstances?

V. Procedures

- A. The Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator will notify all Worker Retraining students regarding the availability of funds and options on a quarterly basis.
- B. The student will provide proof of Unemployment Insurance status to the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator or give permission for Employment Security Department staff to establish eligibility for the Worker Retraining Program.

VI. Minimum Standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress

- A. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress – See Appendix B. Students receiving a “Pass” grade in classes with a “Pass” or “Fail” grading standard (especially, but not limited to, Adult Basic Education) will still be eligible for WRT TCA funds.
- B. Students may appeal cancellation from TCA based on extenuating circumstances. The appeal process is outlined in Appendix B.

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Appendix B WRTFA Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies – 2005-2006

Revised 01/20/06

Lower Columbia College sets minimum standards for satisfactory academic progress and holds students accountable for meeting those standards. Satisfactory Academic Progress is checked prior to awarding WRTFA, even if students did not receive WRTFA in past quarters. It is also checked at the end of every quarter aid is received. This document outlines the requirements for WRTFA satisfactory academic progress at Lower Columbia College.

Students are required to take a minimum of 6 counting credits to receive WRTFA. Changes in enrollment status may affect WRTFA eligibility. Students should check with the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator BEFORE making any schedule changes. Also, students are limited to TWO ACADEMIC PROGRAM changes at LCC.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Chart

Current status	To remain in or return to good standing, you must...	You will be placed on WRTFA PROBATION if you...	Your WRTFA eligibility will be CANCELLED if you...
Full-Time (12 or more credits)	Meet all requirements	Complete 6-11 credits or have cumulative GPA of 2.0 or less	Complete 5 or fewer credits
Part-Time (6-11 credits)	Meet all requirements	Complete 6-8 credits or have cumulative GPA of 2.0 or less	Complete 5 or fewer credits

- **PROBATION** status is considered a warning. Students on probation can still receive WRTFA. However, they must complete have at least a 2.0 GPA in the following quarter, or WRTFA eligibility will be **cancelled**. **A student may not be placed on WRT probation more than TWO times consecutively.**
- **CANCELLATION** means the student did not adequately meet the requirements for WRTFA. The student can reinstate WRTFA eligibility by successfully doing one of the following:
 - Earn back the status of good standing by successfully completing the same number of credits they took in the quarter in which they were cancelled, with a minimum 2.0 GPA.
 - Appeal the decision through the appeals process outlined below.

Appeals Process (See Appendix A for contact information)

- A. Students may appeal their disqualification or cancelled from the Worker Retraining Program by providing a written statement describing their situation including proper documentation as to why they believe they should continue to qualify for WRT funds. This statement, including appropriate documentation should be given to the Worker Retraining Coordinator. The WRT Financial Aid Advisory Committee will then review the case and then make a decision based on the merits of the appeal.
- B. If the student is dissatisfied with the Worker Retraining Financial Aid Advisory Committee decision, the student may appeal the decision to the Vice President for Student Success at LCC.

Approved Supplies by Program

(This appendix will be determined by the Advisors, Worker Retraining Financial Aid Coordinator and the WRTFAAC.)